

or to use in a private home for self-defense.

Like we saw in Las Vegas, these bump-stock devices allow those with a motive to kill to use fully legal firearms to wreak havoc and kill large numbers of people within minutes.

The bill I have introduced is straightforward. It closes the loophole that allows civilians to purchase and use devices that convert semiautomatic weapons into machine guns. Specifically, it bans the sale, transfer, importation, manufacturing, or possession of bump fire devices, trigger cranks, or anything that accelerates a semiautomatic rifle's rate of fire.

The bill further provides an exception to this ban, by allowing for the lawful possession of these devices by law enforcement and the government.

Those who violate the ban would be subject to the same penalty available to those who illegally possess a machine gun under current law.

Closing this loophole should not be a partisan issue. Anyone who has seen footage from the shooting in Las Vegas should recognize that weapons that are altered to emulate automatic gunfire should not be permitted in our communities.

In my view, this bill is a modest proposal. It was one that was included in the Assault Weapons Ban legislation that I proposed 4 years ago, which we failed to pass in 2013.

Tragically, had that legislation been enacted in 2013, it could have perhaps saved lives in Las Vegas.

Indeed, when the police dispatcher was first contacted in Las Vegas at 10:09 PM local time, it took 11 minutes until the last shots were fired and the suspect was neutralized.

Think of that for a moment. If automatic gunfire had been impossible for the gunman, less shots would have sprayed through Las Vegas that night, and less people may have died. That is extraordinarily sobering.

I recall standing here on this floor nearly 4 years ago, urging my colleagues to adopt the assault weapons ban, pleading that it could possibly save lives.

That was on the heels of one of the darkest days in American history, when 20 beautiful children and 6 educators had their lives taken at Sandy Hook Elementary School. It is an absolute travesty that Congress refused to act back then.

It is my strongest belief that when our Nation is faced with dire situations—like sickness, or job stagnation, or human trafficking—it is our job, our solemn oath as lawmakers, to try to solve these problems.

We utterly forsake that solemn oath when we simply do nothing; when we yield to cynicism or to a single lobbying faction.

If we do not act today, we are failing the American people. We are failing our communities. We are failing responsible gun owners.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill. We must act. Now is the time.

IRAN NUCLEAR AGREEMENT

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, the United States is facing an urgent nuclear crisis with North Korea. President Trump should not trigger another nuclear crisis with Iran.

North Korea's nuclear program presents a clear and direct threat to the United States. Our top military official, General Dunford, testified last month that North Korea has the capability to strike the U.S. mainland with an intercontinental ballistic missile. North Korea has ramped up the pace of its ballistic missile tests, firing two ICBMs over Japan in recent months. Just last month, North Korea conducted its sixth test of a nuclear weapon, the largest yet.

Meanwhile, President Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un are engaged in nuclear brinkmanship. Trump has threatened to "totally destroy" North Korea, has tweeted that North Korea "might not be around much longer," and has rebuked his own Secretary of State for attempting to find a diplomatic solution. With each reckless pronouncement, Trump's threats could bring the United States closer to a war that would put at risk millions of lives, including tens of thousands of American soldiers.

Confronted with the North Korean nuclear threat, President Trump is seeking to provoke another nuclear crisis, this time in the turbulent Middle East. He has repeatedly threatened to withdraw from the agreement that the United States and the international community forged to prohibit Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. He has called the Iran deal an "embarrassment," "the worst deal ever," and has vowed to "rip up" the agreement. In making those threats, Trump is putting our security and credibility at risk.

The Iran deal is working. It has verifiably shut off Iran's pathways to a nuclear bomb, imposed tough constraints on Iran's nuclear program, and subjected Iran to the most comprehensive inspection and monitoring regime ever negotiated. How do we know? We know from Donald Trump himself.

Just 2 weeks ago, President Trump found Iran in compliance and waived nuclear-related sanctions on Iran. In fact, the Trump administration has twice certified Iran's compliance with the deal, acknowledging that adherence to the agreement is in the vital national security interests of the United States. Our State Department, our Defense Department, and our intelligence community have all assessed that Iran is in compliance with the nuclear agreement. Most importantly, President Trump has presented no evidence to Congress, as he is required to do by law, of any potential Iranian breach of the deal. In fact, the administration has yet to brief the Senate on its strategy for Iran, despite weekly requests from my colleagues.

Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, Trump has suggested

that he will refuse to certify Iran's compliance with the deal by October 15, the next deadline. This will effectively kick the deal's fate to Congress, which will then have 60 days to decide whether to reimpose the nuclear-related sanctions on Iran waived under the deal.

Make no mistake: Trump's reasons for not certifying Iran's compliance are based on politics, not national security. He wants to tear up an agreement that has prevented Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, simply because it was negotiated by a democratic administration. Trump has threatened to do this without offering any alternative plan to block Iran from getting a nuclear bomb.

In the absence of any evidence of an Iranian violation, Trump and his team are manufacturing reasons not to certify the deal, citing issues not addressed in the nuclear agreement, such as Iran's sponsorship of regional terrorism, its ballistic missile tests, and its human rights violations.

Iran is subject to sanctions for those malign activities. Since the Iran deal has been implemented, the United States had designated over 100 individuals and entities for sanctions. Congress passed a new law this July, that I cosponsored, sanctioning Iran for these aggressions. It is worth underscoring this point: Donald Trump has yet to issue instructions to his administration on how to implement that sanctions law.

In short, the Iran deal has not prevented the United States from taking measures to hold Iran accountable for its destabilizing actions elsewhere. It has, however, prevented Iran from conducting those same actions with a nuclear weapon. That is where our focus should continue to be. A nuclear-armed Iran would be a far greater menace in the region than a nonnuclear Iran.

The truth is, if the United States had tried to expand the nuclear agreement to also address Iran's ballistic missile tests and its regional terrorism, there would simply be no deal. Russia and China would not have agreed to its terms. Preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon was the only point on which all parties were united. Critics of the deal who argue otherwise are not being straight with the American people.

In a world of alternative facts, that point is worth reiterating. No deal, including this one, contains everything we want. That is the nature of a negotiation. Unilaterally withdrawing from the agreement will not produce a better deal today. In fact, we have much less negotiating leverage today. The United States does not have the backing of our allies and partners around the world for withdrawal. Our partners have been crystal clear. They will not renegotiate the deal while it is working. Without that international backing, we have no leverage with Iran.

This brings to bear another, equally important, point. This administration

is already putting American credibility at risk; if we manufacture a specious excuse for abandoning the Iran agreement, our word will mean little. That will make it nearly impossible to negotiate a diplomatic solution to the nuclear crisis in North Korea, already an extremely challenging prospect. Put simply, our allies, partners, and adversaries would have no reason to trust the United States.

That is why Secretary of Defense Mattis, when asked whether it was in the national security interest of the United States to stay in the Iran deal, said, "Yes, Senator, I do."

I want to end by outlining the choice we face right now. The choice we face right now is between a deal or no deal. It is between cutting off Iran's pathways to a bomb or allowing Iran to push forward with its nuclear weapons program. It is between maintaining U.S. leadership in the world or empowering our adversaries. It is a choice between diplomacy or heading down a path toward war.

For these reasons, I urge President Trump to certify Iran's compliance with the nuclear agreement by October 15. If he fails to do so, I urge my colleagues in the Senate to preserve the deal.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I wish to join my colleagues and all Americans in celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month and the innumerable contributions of the Hispanic American community. There is much to celebrate. Although Hispanic Americans comprise 18 percent of the U.S. population, Latino-owned businesses, by some estimates, are responsible for approximately 86 percent of this country's small business growth. What is more, their economic influence is unrivaled by any other demographic since the baby boomers, representing a \$1.5 trillion segment of the consumer market, according to a recent Stanford University state of Latino entrepreneurship, and perhaps, most notably, Hispanic Americans play an increasingly important role in our democracy, with a record 27 million Latinos eligible to vote in last year's election.

It has never been clearer that Hispanic Americans represent an impressive cultural and economic force. Ultimately, however, their value to this country is not in their statistics. It is in their character. A love for family, a commitment to community, and an unparalleled penchant for hard work are the tenets of Hispanic heritage. They are also the building blocks of America. This is no coincidence: Hispanic Americans helped build and sustain our Nation. They are an irreplaceable thread in the fabric of American society. With their knack for innovation, with their fearless pursuit of better lives, and sometimes with their bare hands, they have shaped this country from the ground up, and we are all the better for it.

While we use this month to reflect on their dignity and importance to this country, this year, in particular, the Hispanic American community is best served through actions not just words. Congress must pass the Dream Act. President Trump's order to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, DACA, Program has shaken the Hispanic American community and most American to their core. Dreamers were brought to this country as children, with no decision in the matter. More importantly, they are quintessentially American in every way, except for their immigration status. They have lived, played, worshipped, and gone to school alongside our children most of their lives. They are our children's classmates and neighborhood friends and teammates. They are the college students studying at the library. They are the young serviceworkers at our favorite restaurants, studiously saving up for next semester's tuition. They are young men and women in uniform, serving in harm's way, defending our freedoms.

Dreamers were raised here, and most know no other home except the United States of America. If Congress does not act to protect them, the President's actions will force many of them out of work, into hiding and into poverty. This will not make America stronger. What makes America stronger are the Dreamers themselves. Their spirit, character, and will to overcome represent what is best about our country. We should be proud to call them our own. We shouldn't be sending them underground or into exile.

There is another urgent matter demanding our full attention: hurricane relief for Puerto Rico. The pictures coming from Puerto Rico are heart-breaking. The devastation that has hit the island as a result of Hurricane Maria deserves the same commitment and support that would go to any other location in the United States. Puerto Rico's 3.4 million residents are American citizens, and they should be treated just the same as residents of Florida, Texas, and Louisiana. The Senate should quickly take up the emergency supplemental appropriations request as soon as possible after the Columbus Day recess.

Voting rights, access to quality, affordable healthcare, higher education, tax reform, these are also issues critically important to Hispanic Americans because they are the issues important to the country. There is no breathing room between the two. Our national interests are their personal interests, so their interests must also be ours.

Americans are a diverse group; we do not all look the same or worship in the same way. We are, each and every one of us, united by far more profound things: a love for the freedoms this country affords us; respect for the power and peace we derive from our diverse communities; and an unshakable belief in every person's right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

What makes us Americans is our moral fiber and our shared love for the United States. Any other litmus test is a discriminatory one; yet every day, and sometimes at the hands of our own government, Hispanic Americans are tested and questioned, profiled, and met with suspicion, out of sheer ignorance and baseless prejudice. Still, they march on. They meet the challenges of systemic discrimination with grace, grit, and courage. Indeed, the Hispanic American community often reflects the best of America, even when America offers less than its best in return.

Now more than ever, Hispanic Heritage Month must be about standing up and declaring support for Hispanic Americans. Now more than ever, Congress must use its collective voice to magnify their voices, to affirm Hispanic Americans' rightful place in this Nation and to proclaim a commitment to representing their interests right here in this Chamber.

We must begin fulfilling that commitment by immediately passing the Dream Act. But our commitment must extend further. We must support more equal representation of Hispanic Americans in our society, including in Congress. We must address the healthcare disparities that disproportionately affect the Hispanic community, an issue that begs Congress to work together toward more universal, affordable coverage. We must acknowledge the difficulties Hispanic American students face in affording college. Finally, we must stand firm against the tidal wave of bigoted rhetoric that has flooded the national dialogue in recent months. Whenever and wherever Hispanic Americans are degraded, belittled, or oppressed, basic morality demands that we speak up and speak out. Tolerance and respect, like a muscle, require effort and exercise. We must not allow these values to atrophy on our watch. Diversity and inclusion are American virtues and proud features of Hispanic heritage alike; we must now, and always, be their steward.

TRIBUTE TO MARY GAUTREAUX

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I wish to indulge in a bit of bragging. I know every one of us in this Chamber has that one or two staffers who are the Jacks or Janes of all trades of their operations.

My longtime loyal friend and staffer, who has served the great State of Oregon for over 20 years in my office as a fellow, a field representative, and now deputy State director, Mary Gautreaux celebrates her 70th birthday on October 17. I want to recognize her enormous and long-lasting contributions over the past two decades in my office to making Oregon a better place to live and enjoy.

Mary brings a lifetime of expertise to the natural resources issues that play such an essential part in Oregon's economy and quality of life. Not only